

THE BLUE GRASS BLADE.

ST OF GOOD MORALS.

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NATURAL ENEMIES

ARE PLEASURE AND PIETY
THE CLERGY ALWAYS ARRAYED
AGAINST POPULAR AMUSE-
MENTS

There was a time in the history of this country when the clergy ruled both state and society with an almost merciless despotism. Their power extended from the laughter of a child to the swearing into office of the governor of a colony. Along with education, taxation, official selection, compulsory worship and Sabbath observance, every game, recreation, and even the style of apparel and dressing of the hair were prescribed by them. If a man observed anything in nature which would provoke him to a smile on the Sabbath, or if he should be tempted to kiss his wife on that holy day, the vials of clerical wrath were emptied upon him.

Women were not allowed to make a noise in church as big as the squeak of a mouse. Then, as now, the only church offices to which they were eligible were scrubbers, beggars and waiters on the table at a church festival.

Children who look to the right or to the left of the path which led to Sunday School, and gave joyous expression at the sight of a bright-winged bird, or the frolics of a squirrel, had hearts as black as that which hovers over the impassable Styx fell upon the hearts of men and women and pious austerities plainly written in unmistakable babes. The

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But we can not help but reflect upon what would be the present social condition throughout the whole world, if the clergy reigned supreme, now as then. Would not the same, unchecked religious zeal conduce to the same somber, depressing conditions?

Every well informed historian knows that men and governments are not better today on account of the clergy, but instead the clergy are better on account of the rebellious protests of men and governments. Between an arctic sanctity and tropical doom, all joy and gladness were driven from the human heart.

It is within the memory of most of us when music and the drama were the chief instruments with which the devil ensnared the souls of men. If the clergy could have had their own way the world would have had no Mozart, no Beethoven, no Verdi, no Wagner, no Strauss—nothing in the line of music but psalm singing, doxologies and funeral marches. We would have had no Shakespeare, Sheridan, Booth and Jefferson, but instead the Knoxs, Wesleys, Edwards and Talmages would furnish alone our public entertainments.

Fiction was the next in line with pure hellishness. The world would have had no Scotts, Bulwers, Eliots, Hugos, Irvings, Hawthornes and Tolstois. Romance and imagination would have been choked with the thought of the smoke of the fire that is never quenched. But the effect of the growth of liberal thought is well inscribed in the fact that ministers themselves notably Rev. Charles Sheldon, Rev. Charles Goswami and Rev. John Watson, are now producing works of fiction. Thus the preachers to-day commit the damnable sin of yesterday.

Dancing was equally as monstrous as music, in fact its twin devil. The supple grace, the exquisite ease, the poetry of motion of which the human body is capable were wholly lustful in the minds of the clergy, who somehow more than other people possess a superior instinct in detecting lust. All books and histories not of a religious character would have been suppressed. The nude art would never have been pictured.

Mirth was corrupting and sacrilegious. Why should a man laugh when

in each minute of his fleeting existence his soul is in danger of being plunged a million feet deep into the white heated furnace of eternal hell? Artemus Ward, Josh Billings, Bill Nye, Mark Twain and the many bright beings who have made sorrowing humanity forget for a few moments its cankering griefs and toilsome cares would have been compelled to wear a Jonathan Edwards countenance and their infectious mirth be turned to grievous gloom and sourest sanctity. All humor was utterly dispicable, detracting the mind from the holy contemplation necessary for the salvation of the soul. To be natural here was to forego all hope of supernatural happiness hereafter. To relax from solemnity was to recede to the devil. The poems as Bobby Burns and Eugene Field would have been blotted from the human memory, for their impious insolence in daring to write such verses as "Willie brewed a peck of malt," and "The clink of the ice in the pitcher."

The marvelous power, speed, spirit and endurance of that wonderful animal, the horse, would never have been developed. His highest service would have ended in carrying saints to church at a gait not exceeding a common walk.

Women would never have been permitted to dress in colors brighter than the somber gloom of a parson's face. Notwithstanding this God had dressed this earth in myriad hues of blended light, and canopied it with a blue mantle, fringed with purple dawns and amethyst sunsets, yet none of all this bewildering array of shimmering sheen and dreamy tints was ever intended to decorate his master design. Had the clergy their own way, the world would not have been hunted over for dramatic, add to beauty and which

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The merry jokes of the circus clown, the antics of the trained poodles and dogs, the flying leaps of the tumblers, and the song and dance of the jolly minstrels—the joy of childish hearts—would be forever shut from their wondering eyes, or closed from their eager ears.

There are but few of us of mature years who have not in a greater or lesser degree experienced all these different phases of puritanism.

We have all observed how the clergy have ever associated trained physical development and feats of strength and endurance with the drunkard, the criminal, the bully and the brute.

They have always arrayed the spirit against the body. On the same principle a man should despise the home that shelters him. The clergy discover gross immorality in a glove contest which, as now regulated, is nothing but a test of physical endurance; but in strange contrast they enshrine and worship saints whose only qualifications to sainthood rested upon physical suffering and endurance, self-punishment of the most horrible and exquisite torture.

In fact, the first requisite to sainthood was contempt for and abuse of the body. It had to be scourged to the limits of physical endurance until all that was left of the once God like form was an insane saint encased in a shrunken bag of skin and bones, and such manner of physical debasement, much of which was as disgusting as

horrible, is classed with spirituality and reverence, and pointed to with a pious braggadocio showing the physical endurance the Christian may be capable of. Carefully guarding their own bodily comforts, the clergy have ever pointed the rest of humanity to the examples of the saints until gradually mankind grew to believe that pure religion and undelivered depended wholly upon contempt of the physical and repose of bodily chastisement. The world has outgrown this idea, just as it has always outgrown the clergy. It knows better.

Consistency should be a jewel especially to those who set themselves up as enlightened standards and teachers of men. The clergy have the same right of protest in this country accorded to all other classes of citizens. Much of their work is practicable and commendable and much is inconsistent and in harmony with existing conditions. They are general citizens, but as a class, are not above the average, as criminal statistics will show. The majority of them are not well enough, but they inherit the narrow-mindedness of puritanism, and their power is always retrograde. They exhibit this narrow-mindedness and inconsistency in rising en masse to oppose a glove contest or the Sunday opening of an agriculture fair, while the world is being drenched in the blood of struggling patriots, and of defenseless, unarmed, half-civilized men, women and babes, and not a single organized protest do they make. Barbarities and cruelties, savage, horrible and monstrous, have been committed in the name of Christian civilization within the last few years, and what regard was given them by the clergy? What mention was even made of these national crimes?

Christian soldiers have impaled Chinese babies on their bayonets, tossed them into the air to be caught upon other bayonets held in Christian hands. Defenseless human beings, men, women and children have been slaughtered and pitched into Chinese rivers in such numbers that their swollen corpses have impeded the passage of large steamers. Filipino villages have been burned to the ground and children and the aged and sick cremated by the hundreds.

With such barbarities as these facing them and the whole world how can the Christian clergy find time to oppose a glove contest or Sunday opening?

Have the clergy of this city at any time held a mass meeting to protect against these monstrous outrages? Have they called upon the Mayor and our political leaders and congressmen and senators to join them in protest to all the world against these civilized barbarities? Right in our own country human beings are being burned at the stake for crimes of unguaranteed passion, due largely to bad breeding, bad environments and lack of educational advantages. Some of these burnings take place on the nature of a spectacle, the brutishness of the victors is surpassed by the brutishness of his torturers. Have the clergy at any time risen en masse and protested against this disgraceful crime?

Ignoring all this, how can their present activity in opposing the opening of the state fairs on Sunday be regarded other than a pious peccadillo, one of those irritating inconsistencies of the dimensions, with which they periodically pester the legislature?

J. B. W.

Josephine K. Henry is writing a pamphlet on "Marriage and Divorce" and it will soon be ready for press. It will be an up-to-date treatise of this question that is claiming so much attention from Church, State, and the people. The size of the edition will depend on the demand for this pamphlet, as wishing one or more copies will please drop a postal to Josephine K. Henry, Versailles, Kentucky. The price of this pamphlet will be announced later in the Blade.

Josephine K. Henry's pamphlet, "Man and the Bible" is meeting with warm commendation. It is now circulating in all sections of the United States, and orders for it have been received from England, Scotland, Germany and Sweden. As the edition is rapidly exhausted persons desiring copies of this pamphlet should apply to Josephine K. Henry, Versailles, Ky. and they will be sent as the edition lasts.

A CANADIAN CHRISTIAN WHO WISHES I WAS IN HELL

Some one has sent me a copy of the Blade of September 3, in a wrapper having on it a Canadian stamp.

The paper has no address on it and some one has probably sent some man one knowing the man to be a religious fanatic.

The way the Canada man has expressed his appreciation of the Blade is interesting.

My picture up in the northwest corner he has blackened all over with ink, I suppose that I am blacker even than commonly painted, and where it reads "Charles C. Moore, Editor," he has erased the word editor and substituted "Thief."

Then on the margin opposite my picture he has written, "If you kept your sinful countenance out of this paper it would take a little more."

Sin and damnation is (his grammar-Editor) in your deceitful countenance, you old hypocrite! Remember the Devil knows his own.

Along the bottom of the first page is written "God is love! He forgiveth sins, so prepare for his glorious kingdom and make an honest living and Christ will forgive you!"

Up at the top he has changed my headline so as to make it read, "Edited by a heathen, in the interest of the Devil."

Along the top margin and down the right side he has written, "You will be in hell yet, and your dirty paper will help to burn your already damned soul."

You are a walking Devil, roaming among men. Robbing them of their religion to fill your pockets with your dirty, low, mean paper, but remember there is a day when you will stand before the throne which you are condemning. But, alas, it will be too late. The Devil shall call you into his fire, and put your paper under you to burn your corrupt soul.

You are a thief in the sight of God, and the Devil upon earth. The Blade is in need of Christ."

Over the first page he has poured ink and smeared it over, and on the second and third pages he has marked out nearly everything with his pen, and then poured ink on it and folded it together, so as to make a magnificent blot of it. The writing and spelling are good, but he does not know punctuation and capitalization.

It is right discouraging and disgusting to think that in this enlightened age and in such a country as Canada, any man who could read and write, would be so ignorant and bigoted and full of religious hate, but his performance amused me.

Do you suppose that man really thinks there are any such things as hell and the Devil and God, or is it just because his whole heart and brain are filled with religious hate and he is just trying to scare me by telling me about such things?

It would seem that common sense would suggest to him that I would not be afraid of the things with which he threatens me, but it is common with priests and preachers, one of whom I suppose this man is, to realize that they know no argument for their religion, and as they make their money out of it, all they can do is to abuse and threaten those who do not believe as they do, or pretend to believe.

I suppose if that man had the power, he would burn me at the stake, as the Christians used to do infidels when the Christians had the power.

They are no better now than they were then and they do not hang and burn infidels now as they did then, simply because infidelity has robbed them of the power to do so, and left them so that they cannot do any worse than use ugly, vile language and send it through the mails and escape punishment for libel by concealing their names.

It shows that people ought to appreciate the work that infidelity has done more highly than they do.

There would be no such thing as liberty in this country if infidelity had not destroyed the power of Christianity. But that Canadian is much more consistent in being a Christian than as a citizen of the United States could be.

The New Testament says "Honor the King," and the postage stamp on his wrapper has on it a picture of that old rake and libertine, King Edward VIII. But how can a citizen of the United States be a Christian and plainly and squarely refuse to honor any king, as every citizen of any democratic government must refuse to do?

If Edward was one of the best men in the world no citizen of the United States could consistently honor him, but the Christian religion plainly requires that all men should honor the king, though as in the case of Edward he is a gambler and a rake who drove his wife from home by his indecency with bad women.

We cannot do anything with men like this one who sends the disfigured Blade to me. They are incapable of reasoning, and all that we can do to redeem and save such people is to be good people ourselves, and set them good examples both in our practice and in our precept.

MRS. MARILLA M. RICKER,

Writes About Elbert Hubbard and Ingersoll.

Dover, New Hampshire, Sep. 22, 1905. Charles C. Moore.

Mr. Editor—I fail to see why a good broad-minded freethinker should listen to gossip. I also fail to see why one man should "roast" another of whom he knows nothing, and especially one who is doing excellent work and making it possible for the young people in the vicinity to acquire good trades in various branches of industry, by a very small outlay, I can almost say without money and without price.

It seems to me better to take people as we find them, paying no attention to the talk and judgments of others.

I learned long ago not to go behind the returning boards of my friends. We celebrated Ingersoll's birthday here, the 13th of August. L. K. Washburn was here and was the star speaker, I never heard him speak better.

We had a fair audience and a good time. I want to say now that Ingersoll's mother presented to Congress the first petition ever sent to that body, asking for the abolishment of chattel slavery. It was from his mother that Ingersoll inherited his love of freedom. Ingersoll's father was a clergyman. He was more famous as a father than as a preacher; which speaks well for him. Not one of his sermons can be found to-day, but the words of his famous son have been heard and read by millions.

The Ingersoll of Puritan days was a woman.

Anne Hutchinson defied the narrowness, the intolerance and savagery of Puritanism and was banished from the Massachusetts Colony. The Declaration of Independence ended the reign of Jehovah in our land. A new intellectual, as well as a new political world was opened to mankind. The flag of freedom protected the rest, as well as the homes of men.

Ingersoll the world reached its grandest height, and from his wonderful lips came the great truth of civilization that man is the holiest thing that man knows anything about, and those things above sacred, that add to man's comfort and happiness.

No man ever lived who was more candid than he. He hated falsehood; he loathed and despised hypocrisy, with every fiber of his nature, and he detested sham and pretense. He kept his mind open to the sun and he stood in the light. He respected the children of his brain and he spoke his thoughts without fear.

He was the ideal of every man and woman who loved liberty.

He was supreme philosopher of common sense. He could kill a dogma with a shaft of wit and make an orthodox deacon laugh at his own faith and superstition.

Ingersoll was the truest American that America ever bore. He was the orator of her rivers and mountains, of her hills and dales, of her forests and flowers, of her struggles and victories, of her free institutions, of her stars and stripes; the orator of the home and love and liberty.

He was the liberator of the human race from intellectual thralldom and to celebrate his birthday is celebrating truth, honoring science and paying tribute to liberty.—MARILLA M. RICKER.

CHEERING WORDS.

My wife went one day to the great Lexington fair. She was introduced to a Mrs. Hostetter.

Mrs. H. said, "If you are Charley Moore's wife, I want to shake hands with you. If there is any man in the world that my husband loves it's your husband. He enjoys the Blue Grass Blade more than anything he reads, and if it does not get to him in time he comes to Lexington to see about it."



Charles C. Moore
Editor



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